AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE LANGUAGE FACILITATORS WHILE TEACHING ENGLISH FOR ENGINEERING STUDENTS IN REMOTE AREAS

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ABSTRACT

There are many research articles are available in the field of English language research work to strengthen the English language development of varies levels of the students. In this process, this research paper targets at bringing the facts about the challenges and difficulties of an English language facilitator. In this generation, there are many high sophisticated classrooms and language laboratories, language clubs have become useful sources for improving the language skills of a learner with the help of a language facilitator. This paper focuses on the challenges of a language facilitator. When the facilitator conducts the activities to 16 to 20 years of aged rural and remote area engineering graduate learner, she/he faces the challenges like: grouping the students, designing the activities, evaluation of the learner performance, pre-activity or task preparation, language barriers. In this paper, the researcher tries to find out some suitable solutions for grouping the students, designing activities and reliable evolutionary tools for the language learning of the students from remote areas.

KEYWORDS: facilitator, rural and remote area students, activities, individual activity, learner, grouping, group activity, pre-activity preparation, assessment, evaluation tools.

INTRODUCTION:

The modern world is witnessing the different methods of teaching and learning process which is quite different from the traditional and conventional methods for which the technical support is extended to improve the quality of learning. The knowledge acquisition of science and the other modern technical courses is different from that of English language acquisition. The traditional teaching method involves the teachers' role much but the activity based language learning method requires student participation to the maximum extent. This paper concentrates on different challenges and difficulties that an English language teacher and trainer faces while teaching English for rural engineering students. It is the modern evident that the activity based language learning attracts the attention of the students to make them involve in the learning process effectively and enthusiastically. Since English language is unifying the global nations, every regional student is also supposed to be trained to get connected with the global requirements which can be presented in English language. Therefore, the English language teachers and trainers play a very prominent role in changing the world from the unshaped mind into the knowledgeable world. In this process, English teachers in India practice the different methods i.e Lecture method, communicative method, interactive method.

Dr. Prabhu who has done his research work on the second language acquisition in India, contributed much to the development of this Task based learning approach, which is prominently practiced in India. The task-based learning approach naturally draws much attention and involvement of the learners actively and effectively. Every regional student is expected to be trained to communicate effectively in English language. Therefore, the language teachers adopt this task based teaching and learning method. It not only helps the teachers to enhance the language abilities of the students but also makes them face many challenges; designing the activities, grouping the students, arranging the classroom, observation of the participants. Students are found with different language inabilities: vocabulary, Grammar, Pronunciation,

Challenges to the facilitator;

In the modern era of language learning process, besides many platforms, classroom is the best platform to enhance the language skills of the students who are associated and facilitated by the facilitator, plays a key role to sharpen and extend language skills. The facilitator must make his/her own plans and arrangements to get succeeded in conducting the activities. Activities are nothing but a performance by actions about any given topic can be considered a language activity. In this process of conducting the language activities, teacher must be vigilant in the classroom and he faces the following challenges;

To design the activities;

Since the facilitator acts as a leader in the classroom, he must arrange all the required material and infrastructure that supports the successful ending of the activity in which all the participants serve their contribution. Sometimes the facilitator assigns activities to the individuals, pairs and groups. Based on the knowledge of the individuals certain activities can be conducted; for example, presentations, seminars, JAM(just a minute), public speaking , debates, extempore and etc…… The above mentioned activities can also make the learners perform in the groups. In this case, the facilitator faces some challenges to design the activities because all the activities are not suitable to all the learners. The facilita-

tor will be successful if he can design activities according to the learning abilities and levels of the language learners. The facilitator focuses on forming the learners into groups to develop the collaborative nature and confidence in learning and practicing the targeted language i.e English.

Pre-activity work is also a challenging task to a language facilitator because he should selectively prefer the activities to the students after understanding and close examination of learners' performance and knowledge. For every activity, pre-assessment test of the students is supposed to be conducted to assign the activity to a particular learner otherwise the performance of the learner's may not meet the objective of the selected topic based activity. For example, facilitator wants to conduct a speaking activity on debate. For any type of activities conducted in the classroom or language laboratory, the facilitator must conduct a pre-test to assess the language skills standards particularly vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation. The facilitator should design the activities suitable to the knowledge level of the learners. In these modern days it is observed that much number of students ignore the hobby of reading. Therefore, the learners are unable to extend their word power according to their progressive education. Even professional graduated students are still found with minimum knowledge in the word power. For example; a school student is expected to use the simple words like; say, come, go, speak, walk, study, read, write, stand, sit, sleep and …….etc but it is unfortunate for these range of words are used much by the graduated students. It doesn't mean that they should not use but better than them they are expected.

The designed activities should target the development of the word power and the remaining language components. If the facilitator designs any activity to be conducted either in the classroom or in the language laboratory, he must understand and assess the word power of the learners. It helps all the learners in the group or batch to share the knowledge of the vocabulary.

Creating a learners' group:

The group activities usually stand for encouraging the collaborative nature of learning process besides the development of creative thinking and logical thinking. Therefore, the group activities can boost the language learning process either in the classroom or language laboratory. When the facilitator conducts an individual activity, the learner's impact and learning ability may be lesser influenced because what all he/she performed is assessed and evaluated by the facilitator individually. Grouping the students is an intelligent exercise by the facilitator because all the learners may not have equal knowledge and ability with respect to the language elements since it is known fact that one can perform at once possibility. A few of the group may be active performers and passive performers respectively. If the group is consisted of 8-10 members, the facilitator shall look into the equal range of the performers to bring out the productive development of the particular activity sometimes.

The facilitator should exercise prior to grouping the students by considering his/her medium of study in the past, mother language, own culture, interests, skills, knowledge of the particular given topic. In a classroom of sixty learners, it is not expected to have the equal range of knowledge, skills and the above mentioned areas. In the researcher's observation, one participant can really influence the others in terms of sharing many things; knowledge of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, culture, tradition, leadership qualities. Of course! It is not

expected to be happened in all the activities since the facilitator designs the activities with a special targeted objective. For example, the facilitator sometimes designs the activities to improve the special targeted language components like; vocabulary, grammar topics, writing skill, speaking skill, listening skill. The facilitator should not fix the groups permanently for every activity. If the grouping is done according to the learner's roll numbers, the entire objective of the designed activity will be lost.

Classroom set up.
The relation between a teacher and infrastructure goes in the classroom hand in hand because it helps the teacher like a tool to approach the learners effectively to meet with the targeted objective of the designed activity. A well equipped classroom can draw the attention of the learners much and it can shape the holistic learning process of the learner. Subjects like mathematics, physics, chemistry, social sciences do not need much infrastructure since these subjects can be dealt by the facilitator effectively by conducting simple activities with the support of least amount of infrastructure. But, teaching second language like English requires some infrastructure based on the proposed activity. To conduct group discussion in the classroom, the English language facilitator require the chairs, round table, marker board, podium or nectar, good sound system, projector, and the other digital amenities. For JAM (Just A Minute) activity, the facilitator needs only the support of the nectar and sound system. For group discussions, primarily round table, chairs and mike is enough to make it success Therefore, it is understood that the facilitator must focus on his required arrangements for his activity demanded. Sometime, it may not be possible to the facilitator to maintain the required support of the amenities because the authorities of the particular organizations have to look into the procurement of the facilities to the utmost necessity and comfort of the students. Hence, this research scholar experiences the different struggle to make an arrangement of the needed infrastructure; it is suggested to get adjusted with existing classroom set up.

Monitoring the Students;
The learners are supposed to perform their involved activity either on the dais or off the dais in the classroom. If the performance goes on the dais, the language facilitator can monitor them effectively. When they perform off the dais, it would be the toughest job to observe and monitor the students since number of groups participates in the activity. After being involved in the activity designed, the learners must follow the instructions given by the English language facilitator sincerely. It is observed in the classroom of forty to sixty students that the grouping of the students or pairing the students is essential to be done in it means the facilitator must focus on the learner's commitment whether they follow the announced instructions because a few of the learners may shift their focus from the directed language to their mother tongue since it is easy to present anything in the mother tongue effectively. If the learner is encouraged to speak in the respective mother tongue continuously, the fluency of his mother tongue will be enhanced abundantly but not the targeted second language acquisition, i. e English language. Therefore, all the objective of the designed activity will be futile.

The language facilitator, instead of sitting idle as a passive audient, he/she must keep on moving in and around the classroom during the activity is performed. The group activities can polarize majority of the learners to participate enthusiastically. But, the facilitator must be vigilant in his observation on the selective learners because a few of the participants may reluctantly behave and try to get away from the activity to engage their own affairs. The inactive and reluctant performers should be made to be engaged in at least another similar activity by assessing their ability to perform on the spot itself otherwise they will spoil the positive spirit of the enthusiastic learners. Since the students are associated with their peer groups, they can   The facilitator should see that the influence of the inactive participants should not be more on the active participants who ought to be prioritized to have the lead role to make the designed activity success in terms of meeting with the targeted objective. Some of the participants are found with mobile usage that distracts their attention along with that of the interested participants' during the activity conducted. A few of the students may be overjoyed to perform in any short of group activity. In this process, they might make mistakes out of their curiosity for the participation. It seems that the designed activities usually involve the passive and active learners. Therefore, the English language facilitator should look into the both categorical learners by playing the vital role in his/her observation.

Draw the attention of the students;
Dealing the students of aged seventeen to nineteen years in a classroom is not at all a cake walk for a language facilitator since these aged under graduate learners are busily engaged in their personal affairs with respect to their own developed hobbies, interests, needs, entertainment, necessities. It seems that many a student learners might develop some affection or infatuation either on individuals or the groups; for example, they might follow or adore the movie actors, political leaders, teachers, friends and close persons. They are neither mature nor immature for their studies and career since it is typical age to understand. At this age, students may be turned up for serious mode of learning and language practice by being motivated. Besides being connected to acquire the knowledge of the engineering subjects, every student is supposed to acquire the knowledge of English language to broadcast their obtained knowledge. It is understood that this region is witnessing the students who are found with the poor knowledge of not only the general issues but also the science and technology related topics. It doesn't mean

that they knew nothing but they have a little knowledge about the discussed. As everybody knows the general saying, 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing,' can be apt to the little knowledgeable learners in the group activities in which they can influence and impact on others group participants by sharing their knowledge.

The under graduate language learners can be attracted to the pre-planned activities some extent and some pre-planned activities also need much motivation to turn up themselves. Every group may perform well but the individuals may fail in the performance. Therefore, the language facilitator must be ready with another spontaneous activity that should represent their interests, hobbies, needs and necessities. The facilitator must instruct the learners clearly and inject something positively into their mind by explaining the importance and objective of the activity. The learners can be allowed to come up with their own topics if they feel discomfort with the topics given by the facilitator. It requires pouring the topic related ideas with the requisites vocabulary into the learners' mind to make the activities successful if the facilitator faces challenges to conduct the spontaneous activities.

Evaluation method;
The language facilitator must concentrate on conducting the activities and evaluation of the learners' performance. The process of evaluation can strengthen the students' performance further i.e vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, accuracy besides creative thinking, critical thinking, and analytical thinking, problem solving methods and all life skills since they participate in the group activities. In a classroom of forty to sixty students, it is difficult task to assess all the students' performance effectively and accurately. Besides having many scientific methods of evaluation, the language facilitator can identify a few brilliant students in the classroom to make his/her evaluation method productively. The identified co-performing candidates should understand the objective of the activity and focus on noting down the candidate using vocabulary and sentence construction. If the group of ten students performs an activity, there must be ten co-participants from the same classroom should be ready with their notes, pen to note down the vocabulary like; number of verb forms, adverbs, adjectives and other related words including the grammatical errors because many student learners lack the knowledge of tenses minimum. Finally, the facilitator must collect the gathered information from the ten members to understand the level of the participated candidate for planning the next activity to make them sharp in the language skills. In a fifty minutes times of period, it may not be possible to conduct activity to all the sixty students if the facilitator ignore the assistance of the few brilliant students, the evaluation may be leers effective than the expected result. In the group activities, the individuals and the group performance should be focused otherwise a few participants may be active, remaining may be reluctant in the process of learning.

CONCLUSION:
The researchers of the present study, working as ELT trainers at Aditya Institute of Technology and Management, Tekkali have been working for many years for the Engineering under graduates in the remote area. It is clear from our understanding that every language facilitator probably more or less faces the same set of challenges to conduct the activities in the classroom. The facilitator needs to put much effort to conduct a twenty to thirty minutes activity besides his sincerity, honesty and commitment for the learners' language development. The language learners are found with different inabilities; lack of proper vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, lack of thinking ability, self confidence, mobile addiction, poor reading skills, writing skills. Therefore, it is suggested that the facilitator should mind of the grouping, designing the activity, performance and evaluation of the students' performance. It is very important to the facilitator to look into the enhancement of the students' knowledge in vocabulary and grammar. These two language elements help the learners to the minimum expose in terms of the language skills. It is found that many engineering students ignore the English language acquisition since they gave importance for obtaining the knowledge of the other subjects related to the science during their previous education. Therefore, it is the most challenging task to the English language facilitator to make them improve language skills. The facilitator must be vigilant and particular during the activity conducted in the classroom rather than the students.

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